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GROUP WORK WITH AFDC MOTHERS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS.

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A SERVICE PROGRAM FOR MOTHER-DAUGHTER GROUPS WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED AS PART OF A DELIQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM IS DESCRIBED AND EVALUATED IN THIS REPORT. THE PROGRAM WAS SET UP TO REDUCE COMMUNICATION BARRIERS BETWEEN THE MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS AND TO HELP THE MOTHERS COPE WITH THE CHILD-REARING PROBLEMS OF POOR, ONE-PARENT FAMILIES. ALL OF THE MOTHERS EXCEPT ONE WERE RECEIVING AID TO FAMILIES OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN (AFDC) AND ALL OF THE GIRLS WERE IN EITHER THE FIFTH OR SIXTH GRADE. ONE SET OF MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS WAS REFERRED BY THE SCHOOLS BECAUSE THE GIRLS HAD BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS (THE SCHOOL GROUP), AND THE OTHER SET WAS SUGGESTED BY THE AFDC CASEWORKER (THE AFDC GROUP). THE GROUP WORKER FOR THE SCHOOL GROUP USED A RECREATION-ACTIVITY THERAPY APPROACH, WHEREAS THE CASEWORKER FOR THE AFDC GROUP USED A METHOD SIMILAR TO A FAMILY EDUCATION APPROACH. OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES MADE IT IMPRACTICAL TO EVALUATE SYSTEMATICALLY THE HYPOTHESIS THAT IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WOULD BENEFIT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS. DISCUSSIONS OF THE PROBLEM, THE PURPOSE AND METHODS OF THE PROGRAM, RESULTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS ARE INCLUDED IN A GENERAL SECTION, WHILE ASPECTS OF ADMINISTRATION, STAFFING, BUDGET, OPERATING STATISTICS, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, AND EVALUATION METHODS MAKE UP A SECOND PART. (NH)

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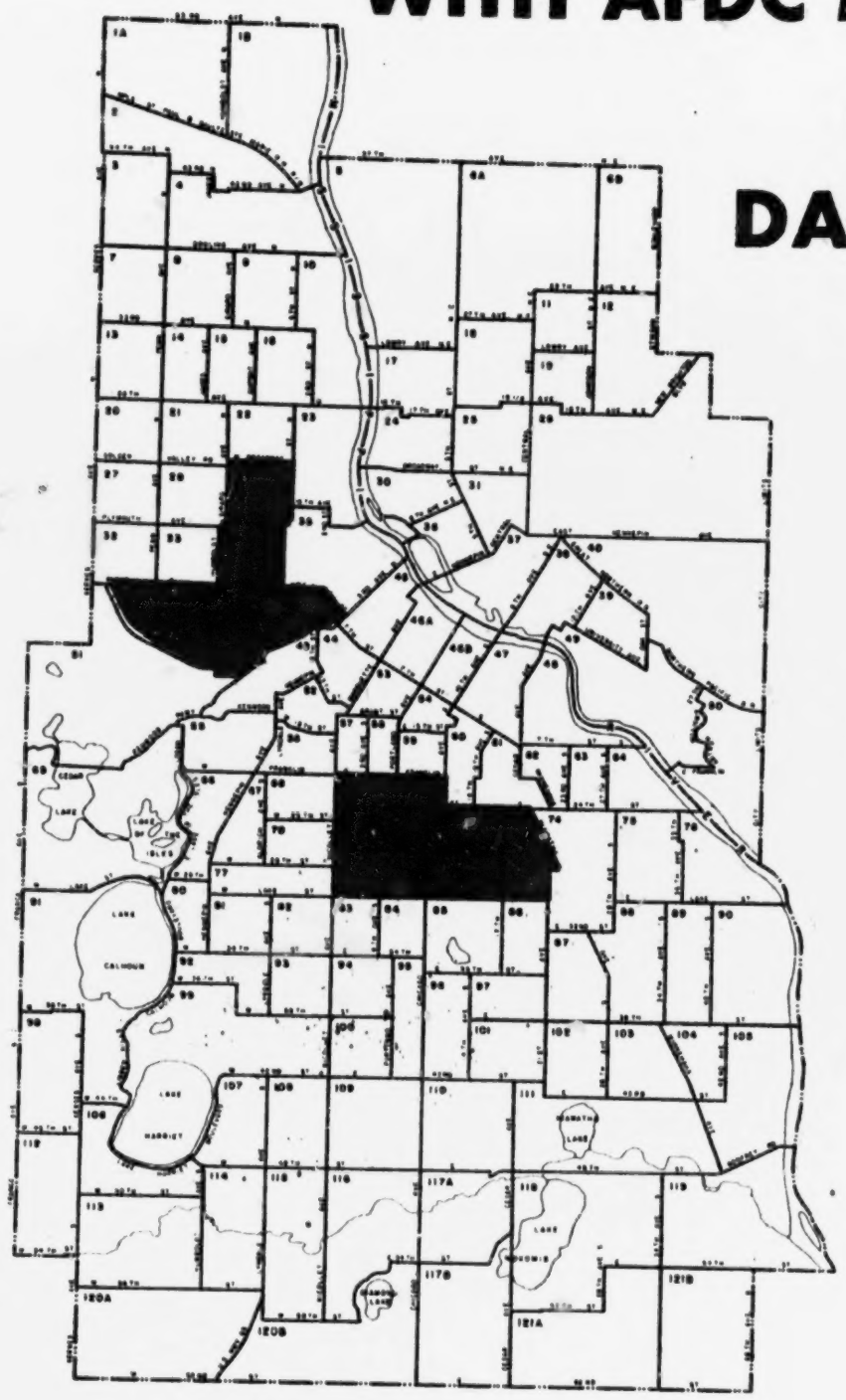
GROUP WORK WITH AFDC MOTHERS and their DAUGHTERS



A YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

EVALUATION REPORT

OCTOBER 1966

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GROUP WORK WITH AFDC MOTHERS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS

A Youth Development Project Demonstration Conducted
by the Big Sister Association, Inc.

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Minneapolis, Minnesota
October 1966

SUMMARY

Group Work with AFDC Mothers and their Daughters

A group work program was proposed to improve communications between mothers and daughters in AFDC single parent families.

Four groups were formed:

1. Fifth and sixth grade Target Area girls having school problems of various kinds
2. Mothers of these girls
3. Mothers with well integrated personalities selected from AFDC rosters
4. Fifth and sixth grade daughters of the mothers in group #3

All mothers, except one, were receiving AFDC. Meetings were held weekly. Frequent joint mother-daughter meetings were held. Mothers were required to attend meetings in order for daughters to participate.

A "therapeutic" approach was used for group #2 while a family education approach was used for group #3. Daughters' groups focused on recreational activities as a form of activity group therapy. Recreation seemed to be a strong point for mothers and daughters since many of them were isolated from social groups and activities.

Plans to test the original hypothesis that improved communications would lead to improved family relationships were abandoned. Operational difficulties, stemming in part from the reduction in the YDP demonstration, made such a test impracticable.

Evaluation focused on:

1. Participants' reactions to the meetings
2. A search for appropriate "goals" for the program
3. Personality changes of participants as measured by the California Personality Q Set

The program was operated by the Big Sisters, Inc. as part of the Youth Development Project demonstration. Funds were supplied by the Minneapolis Foundation, the Archie D. and Bertha H. Walker Foundation, and the United Fund of Hennepin County.

About this Report -

This report is divided into two major sections. Part A is designed for those readers who wish to get a general idea of the program. It tells what the program attempted to do and how well it succeeded. It also gives recommendations for future programming. We have tried to avoid details, particularly those of a technical nature. The language is also non-technical.

Part B describes the detailed administrative and technical aspects of the program. It will be most interesting to those persons who enjoy reading statistical, evaluative material or who wish to start a similar program. In one sense, it is an "operator's manual." Some of the language is technical.

* * *

Because this report is aimed at two audiences, some repetition is unavoidable. For example, evaluation results are summarized in Part A. The details are given in Part B. Both sections describe the results, although the language and the amount of detail vary.

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Thanks are also expressed to Mrs. June Reinhard, Special Services Teacher of Grant Elementary School, for her assistance throughout the course of this program and to caseworkers of the AFDC Unit, Hennepin County Welfare Department, for their help in referring clients to the program.

Douglas Chapel, located in North Minneapolis, contributed facilities for the group meetings during the first two years. They also provided transportation for one set of groups during the first year.

Particular thanks must be expressed to Anna Miller and Perry Roth, the group workers involved in this program. Although we usually avoid acknowledgments to "employees" we feel that in this case the extra time and effort they devoted to rather laborious evaluation techniques, and to critiquing this report, deserve special mention.

GLOSSARY

Big Sister Association, Inc. (Big Sisters) - The Big Sister agency is a voluntary, non-sectarian social work agency serving pre-adolescent and adolescent girls, residents of Hennepin County (Minnesota). The main professional services of the agency are offered through the social casework and social groupwork methods. These services are offered in relation to problems of personal adjustment in the home, school, and/or neighborhood, for the purposes of treatment and prevention.

School Group - In this program, mothers and daughters selected for Intensive Group Work because the daughters were exhibiting behavior problems in school.

AFDC - Aid to Families with Dependent Children - A joint county-state-federal program designed to provide financial help and service to children under 18 years of age in order to preserve their home and assure them the experience of family living. Financial help is determined on an individual basis according to state-wide standards established by the Minnesota Department of Public Welfare. It may include funds for shelter, fuel, light, food, clothing, medical care, household incidentals, and special items essential to a family's welfare. The average payment per child in the U. S. was $35.00 a month in September 1966.

AFDC Group - In this program, mothers (and daughters) selected for Intensive Group Work from AFDC rosters. No specific major problems evident at the time of selection.

Intensive Group Work - In this program, weekly one and one-half hour group sessions of five to ten mothers or daughters led by a group worker with a Master's Degree in social work.

Target Areas - Two geographic areas, just north and just south of the center of Minneapolis, containing approximately 38,000 people. Selected as demonstration areas for the Youth Development Project demonstration because of high rates of crime, delinquency, dependency, poverty and other social problems.

Youth Development Project (YDP) - A planning and demonstration project for delinquency prevention. Beginning in June 1962 with a two-year planning grant of $149,845 from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development, Welfare Administration, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the YDP, a branch of the Community Health and Welfare Council of Hennepin County, (Minneapolis, Minnesota) planned a broad gauged approach to delinquency prevention for two small demonstration, or Target, areas of Minneapolis. A limited one-year demonstration was carried out with funds provided by the Office of Juvenile Delinquency ($250,000) and by local sources ($200,000) before the project was absorbed by the war on poverty. The demonstration phase of the YDP ended on December 31, 1965.

PART A

GROUP WORK WITH AFDC MOTHERS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS

Alternate Program Titles:

This program has also been referred to as:

- Big Sisters Group Work with Girls and Mothers
- Big Sisters Group Work with Mothers and Daughters
- Big Sisters Group Work Program

* * * * * * *

I. THE PROBLEM: Why was this program initiated?

The National Picture

It has been estimated that over five million children in this country are growing up in one parent families (Freudenthal, 1959). It has also been estimated that one out of every six children in the United States, at some time during his life, will be living in a family receiving AFDC* (Winston, 1964, p.1). In most AFDC families the mother is the only parent. These mothers throughout the U. S. receive an average of $35.00 per month to support each child (Program and Operating Statistics, 1966, p.26). Thus, the mother receiving AFDC support is faced with the dual problems of trying to rear children in a family broken by some kind of calamity and trying to accomplish this under conditions of gross material poverty.

Freudenthal (1959), discussing a group work program for parents conducted in Baltimore, observed that there were four major dynamic elements operating on only-parents:

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* Unfamiliar terms are defined in the Glossary. See page ii.

1. A sense of incompleteness and frustration.
2. A sense of failure.
3. A sense of guilt.
4. Marked overt or underlying feelings of ambivalence between only-parent and child.

These observations were not supported by hard data, but they seem obvious from a common sense viewpoint. However, since only-parents in group work situations are almost always involved on a voluntary basis there remains the possibility that these "dynamic elements" do not represent all, or even most, only-parent personalities. Whatever the case, there is no doubt that the only-parent is faced with severe problems which do not beset the intact family and that these problems are multiplied when the only-parent is poor.

Although Freudenthal's study did not involve AFDC families, he was alert to the potential of conducting group work with such families. The present report describes a group work program for AFDC mothers and their daughters, in the city of Minneapolis.

The Minneapolis Picture

Minneapolis is a city with almost one-half million inhabitants. According to the 1960 Census, 40,761 or one out of five women in the city were divorced, separated or widowed. Most of these women were widows (29,431) but approximately one of each 18 women in the city was divorced or separated from her husband (11,330), (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1962).

In Minneapolis AFDC allowances are higher than national or state averages, amounting to approximately $55.00 per recipient each month. Additional allowances are made for medical and dental care.[1]

The AFDC League, a recently formed organization, lobbies for the rights of AFDC recipients. In addition, two organizations in the city are specifically oriented toward the only-parent. They are Parents without Partners, a chapter of a national organization and Solo Parents a local organization affiliated with the

1. Hennepin County Welfare Department, Personal communication, October 25, 1966.

YMCA. Both organizations are primarily social in nature, with some educational activities. Children are frequently included in the programs. The active membership of the two organizations combined is under 250.

The Target Areas

The adolescent girl from the Target Areas faces the pressures of adolescence just as any other teenager. In addition, she lives in a neighborhood with high rates of crime, disease, illegitimacy and delinquency. Girls from broken homes must face these added problems, usually without the support of a father. In many cases, these girls live in families which are dependent upon society for financial support.

The Youth Development Project (YDP) staff met with Target Area teenagers, male and female, on a number of occasions during the 1962-1964 demonstration planning period. These youngsters told of their problems of having "nothing to do," of adults who "don't understand us" and of their confusion about what the future held for them.

Two points were repeated again and again. First, they wanted help in communicating with their parents. They wanted to be heard and to be able to speak to their parents. This wish for communication went beyond a desire to ask for privileges. They wanted to talk with parents about conflicting values of sexual behavior, about their friends and their values, and some teenagers wanted to be able to tell their parents that they appreciated them--even though they were poor. But they didn't know how. The second point was repeatedly made by the girls in the group. They wanted to know why a girl who gets in trouble with the law is never forgiven by society while boys can "get away with so much."

Lack of communication between children and parents often contributes to delinquency. Without the opportunity for expressing feelings or asking questions, the child soon becomes "bottled up" and frustrated. "My parents don't under-

stand me" becomes translated into "My parents don't like me" and in turn, this becomes "I am not worth liking." Once a child has labeled herself as "unlikable," delinquency is an easy step away. Illegal acts are committed to gain admiration from peers; to buy affection, to prove that after all she <u>is</u> likable.

In one meeting a group of Target Area girls was asked what they would select if there could be but one program to prevent delinquency. One of the girls stood up and said, "I'll tell you what I'd do, I'd take a bunch of people and I'd train them to come into our houses and help us talk to our parents because if we could talk to our parents, you would not have to worry about delinquency. Because if I get into a fight in school and tell my mother, she gets all shook up about it and causes a big crisis. So I don't tell her about the little trouble I get in 'till it's out of hand."

It has been noted that the ratio of male to female delinquents in the Target Areas was much smaller than in other parts of the city (Community Health and Welfare Council, 1964, p.255; Faunce & Murton, 1965). In 1964, for example, 2.5 Target Area boys were arrested for each Target Area girl arrested. For the entire city, including Target Areas, the ratio was 3.4 boys for each girl. Approximately the same number of boys and girls lived in the city (and in the Target Areas), so ratios were not dependent on disproportionate numbers of boys or girls in the total population.

It has also been observed that social services for girls, relative to social services for boys, are inadequate in the city of Minneapolis (The Role of Agencies Serving Low Income Girls, 1965, p. 24 ff.).

Although specific evidence relating delinquency among girls to broken homes and inadequate services was not collected it seemed reasonable to assume that group work with only-parent mothers and their daughters could help the mothers with child rearing tasks and thus prevent or allay behavior problems among the daughters.

Little is known of the communications process between teenagers and their

parents. This process is particularly important when there is only one parent available to receive and send communications. Such one-parent families are more numerous in the Target Areas of the city than in the outlying residential areas. One out of ten Target Area women over age fourteen was separated or divorced compared with one out of eighteen in the city of Minneapolis. All of these women did not have children, but if the number of families broken by death are added to those broken by marital strife, it is not unreasonable to assume that ten per cent of all Target Area families are one-parent families. In the Target Areas there were approximately 1,400 such families.

II. THE PURPOSE: What did this program attempt to do?

This group work demonstration program as originally proposed was intended to gain knowledge of the problems faced by Target Area girls and new "know-how" in working with these girls. The program was also aimed at reducing the communication block between Target Area mothers and their pre-adolescent daughters. It was hoped that the reduction of this communication block would strengthen the family unit and give added support to these girls in their efforts to become successful adults. Increased knowledge about the feelings and concerns of mothers faced with raising a family alone was also anticipated. This knowledge was to be shared with other agencies serving AFDC recipients.

An additional purpose of the program was to provide the mothers with the insight and support needed to accomplish the task of child rearing in those situations where the mother carried the entire family responsibility (Community Health and Welfare Council, 1964, pp. 816-817).

Two sets of mother-daughter groups, selected by two distinct referral processes, were established. Each group had a unique focus in addition to the more general program goals. The first group consisted of girls referred from one of the Target Area elementary schools because they were girls (from one-parent families) who were exhibiting behavior problems. The second group was comprised of the mothers of these girls. Both groups are referred to throughout this report as the School Group to indicate that their source of referral was the school.

The third group was made up of women from the Target Area referred to the program by AFDC caseworkers. The fourth group was comprised of daughters of these women. These two groups will be referred to as the AFDC Group. No distinct problems, other than only-parent status and low income, were identified for this group of mothers and daughters. It should be noted that all of the mothers in the School Group, except one, were also receiving AFDC support. However, this fact was secondary to the other reasons for their selection.

The unique goal for the School Group girls was to correct behavior problems in social settings with the hope that such improvement would carry over to the schoolroom. The focus for the AFDC Group members was on helping them resolve relatively "normal" family problems as well as problems unique to one-parent families.

III. THE PROGRAM: How was this program carried out?

Essentially, the program was carried out by traditional group work methods. A man, with a master's degree in social work and many years experience in group work methods, was hired by the Big Sisters Agency to work with the mothers in the two groups.

It was felt that since all the mothers had had unfavorable experiences with men in the past, the association with a man in a friendly, non-threatening situation might help give them a more objective perspective of men in general. It was also believed that a male group worker might have favorable effects on the daughters, all of whom were living in fatherless families.

A woman, with qualifications similar to those of the male group worker, was hired to work with the two groups of daughters.

Both positions were part time.

Selection of Participants

Two distinct procedures were used for selecting participants of the School and AFDC Groups.

School Group: Although the original proposal discussed the problems of the adolescent girl, the group workers pointed out the necessity for reaching the girls before menarche. It was believed that greater behavioral modification could be brought about before the girls had established set patterns of beliefs about the concept of "womanhood." It was also felt that there was an advantage to involving younger girls before strong peer relationships had been formed. An attempt was made to obtain a group of sixth grade girls from one Target Area school but the number meeting the criteria was insufficient. Subsequently, fifth grade girls from the same school were also included.

The school social worker in one north Target Area school reviewed the records of all fifth and sixth grade children. Eighty-six of the 163 children were girls. From these 86 girls, the social worker selected all girls living in AFDC supported families who were having "problems" in school. These problems were broadly interpreted to include behavior disorders, underachievement, and the lack of emotional control. Thirteen girls met these criteria. A letter, signed by the principal and the school social worker was sent to each parent announcing ". . . a helpful new service will be available to you and your fifth or sixth grade daughter." Sponsors of the service were identified as the Youth Development Project and the Big Sister Association. Parents were invited to phone the school for an appointment to talk to the group worker. Five letters were also sent to women who were separated from their husbands, but not receiving AFDC support.

Phone calls, made by the school social worker, were used to follow up the invitational letters. Women who exhibited interest in the program were contacted by the group workers and interviews were scheduled. Mothers were interviewed by the male group worker and daughters by the female group worker. The purpose of the interviews was two-fold. First, to give additional information

about the nature of the program. Second, to collect background information about the potential participants.

Eight women were interviewed and agreed to participate in the program. They were informed that the program had a joint mother-daughter focus and that if one of the members did not attend the meetings then the other member would be dropped. One mother never attended a meeting and her daughter was dropped at the end of three weeks. Another girl, whose mother did not appear for the interviews, was also dropped at the end of three weeks. Ultimately, seven mother-daughter pairs constituted the School Group.

AFDC Group: This group was selected from a roster of AFDC cases supplied by the Hennepin County Welfare Department. The roster contained approximately 80% of all AFDC cases in the YDP North Target Area. Twenty per cent of the cases were not listed because they were "carried" by caseworkers who worked in other parts of the city. That is, the client had moved into the Target Area and her caseworker continued to work with her even though his geographic assignment was in some other part of the city. It was impractical to attempt to review the rosters of all caseworkers.

Caseworkers were asked to refer Target Area Families which had a daughter in fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grades. (At that time adolescent girls were still being considered for inclusion in the program.)

A list of 47 names was given to the two group workers. After reading the case histories the two group workers decided that the problems of the women were so varied that there might be difficulty in forming a group with similar interests if participants were selected randomly. Accordingly, the workers established criteria for selecting a group of "healthy" women who were similar in several respects. Twenty women were selected on the basis of these criteria:

a. Age of mother: It was assumed that a younger mother with younger children would find it easier to make modifications in their mother role.

b. The length of time on AFDC: It was assumed that the woman who has used AFDC longer has higher probability of chronic dependency and might be less able to take on new behaviors.

c. Intelligence: Because the discussion method will be used and the group will deal with concepts and strategies of parenthood an average or better IQ would be necessary.

d. Degree of deterioration: There should not be an extreme amount of deterioration, disorganization or multiple problems evident in the home.

e. Sexual delinquency: Mothers should not have a problem of chronic sexual delinquency (although all had out of wedlock children).

f. Frustration tolerance and impulsivity: What will be required will be movement from a Class 5 to Class 3 values.[2] This would include the ability to postpone gratification, to plan ahead, to be comfortable with self control and the ability to work toward changed patterns of behavior in themselves and in their daughters.

Caseworkers contacted the twenty women; first by letter and then by phone. These twenty women had children in fifth or sixth grade at the school attended by the School Group children, or at a nearby Target Area school.

Nine women, one of them with two children in fifth and sixth grade, expressed interest, were interviewed by the group workers, and agreed to participate in the program.

The Program

Group sessions began in November 1964. Initial enrollment was nine mother-daughter pairs for the School Group and nine mothers with ten daughters in the

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2. From Hollingshead & Redlich, 1958, p. 95ff.

Class 5: Little participation in community organizations. Resent organized society. Do not save money. Parents value high school education and good job for impulses gratified.

Class 3: Save money. Interested in the community. Want children to finish high school and have some college. Forgo immediate pleasure to achieve long range plans.

AFDC Group. However, two of the School Group mothers never attended meetings.

All but one of the eighteen families enrolled were AFDC recipients. All daughters were in fifth or sixth grade. Mothers ranged in age from late twenties to mid-forties. Three mother-daughter pairs were non-white.

From November 1964 to April 1965 weekly meetings were held in Douglas Chapel, a North Target Area non-denominational church. Initially each of the four groups met separately, daughters in the afternoons following school, one mothers' group in the evening and the other mothers' group on Saturday mornings. Later, joint mother-daughter meetings were held, but the School and AFDC Groups never met together.

Transportation was provided by Big Sisters and the chapel, as many of the mothers expressed fear of walking in the neighborhood at night and public transportation was lacking.

The Daughters' Groups

Recreational activities were used by the girls' group worker as a means of interesting the girls in the program and as a form of activity group therapy. Sports, crafts, cooking, field trips, and role playing were utilized. One aim of these activities was to generate an acceptance of rules and regulations. Girls were required to modify their (unacceptable) behavior in order to participate in the "fun" activities. Success oriented projects, particularly crafts, were frequently employed.

These pre-adolescent girls were helped to gain skills which would allow them to compete in junior high school. Frequently they discussed problems concerning family life. They participated in field trips designed to give them the experience they needed to make them more confident in classroom discussions. Visits to an art center, eating in a restaurant, and going to the group worker's home were included.

The two groups of girls impressed the group worker as quite different. A description of the daughters' School Group is provided by the girls' group worker:

> They all ranged between dull normal and normal intelligence, most were achieving poorly, had poor work habits, and did not have friends. The girls described school in a negative way - especially those who were the low achievers. Most of the girls did not attend any groups in the community and those who had a limited group experience described it rather negatively.
>
> They attended the group meetings very regularly. They used the group in the beginning to satisfy themselves with little consideration for others. They depended on the worker to provide them with this satisfaction. Most of the girls were poorly socialized, were impulsive, and had low frustration tolerance. Some of their behavior modes, such as language or style of dress, were in conflict with school and maybe neighborhood norms. Most of the girls were hostile and suspicious of adults. They were not able to assume social roles appropriate for different situations. Most of the girls had difficulty in assuming responsibility and expressing dependency in appropriate ways. They had poor self concepts and compensated by being aggressive, and often only superficially involved with others. They maintained excessive social distance.

By contrast, the girls from the AFDC Group were seen as "operating on a higher level." (This same observation was made of the mothers in the AFDC Group - to be discussed later.) No doubt this difference reflected the selection procedures; the School Group daughters being selected because they had observable school problems while the AFDC Group girls were selected simply because they were children of AFDC mothers - and relatively healthy mothers at that.

> The girls had a number of skills. They were able to participate and contribute in the group meetings. Because the girls came from two separate schools, they seemed to form two groups. After the fifth or sixth meeting more of the personal type of problems were expressed in the group. Conflicts between individuals began to arise, and it was evident that although most of the girls could function rather adequately, many had a number of problems which were not well controlled.
>
> The girls made good use of the group and their primary motivation was to have fun. Their attendance was excellent.

The Mothers' Group

Mothers were told before becoming group members that the meetings were being set up in a program whose purpose was to prevent delinquency, promote the physical and mental health of their daughters, and give them an opportunity to discuss child rearing problems. The mothers were encouraged to choose their own topics for discussion and to develop the group in ways most serviceable to them.

After one or two meetings it became apparent to the mothers' group worker that the two groups were quite disparate in nature. The School Group mothers had few community contacts, were extremely concerned with their own needs, and tended to project their problems onto their children. Compared with the AFDC Group they appeared much more pathological. The workers soon began referring to this group as the "therapy" group.

A composite picture of the "typical" mother in the School, or therapy, group was made by the group worker after thirty-four sessions:

> The typical member of this group is 35 years old with four children. She is raising her family without a husband. She has been divorced four years after eleven years of marriage. The family lives in a public housing project and depends on AFDC funds for their income. Although she has not completed a high school education, the mother places value upon her children completing at least high school. Although she stresses physical care of her children and often makes extensive use of medical facilities, she is naive and unaware of the psycho-social developmental needs of the children. She tries to encourage autonomy in her children, but has difficulty in setting an example herself in this area. This mother and her daughter were referred to this program by the school social worker. The school felt that the child would probably experience difficulty in completing high school.
>
> Mrs. X describes herself as a nervous person who is quite uncomfortable with a group of people. She tends to avoid gatherings such as PTA meetings. She is reluctant to attend parent-teacher conferences at school for fear that she may be criticized by the school. Because she has a marked distrust for men, Mrs. X has not made much of an attempt to seek out male companionship or perhaps consider re-marriage. She lives in a densely populated neighborhood among many minority groups whom she distrusts. She is unwilling to walk alone after dark and spends almost all of her time at home.

> Essentially, Mrs. X is an unskilled worker. She has had some work experience prior to marriage, but has not attempted to support her or her family by her own labor. Her economic wants seem modest and she appears to be able to follow a budget reasonably well. Her home is furnished very modestly and is rather untidy. Many items are in disrepair. However, the children seem to be adequately clothed.
>
> Although the family tends to feel uncomfortable in their immediate neighborhood, there are few opportunities to travel outside. Other than familiarity with shopping facilities, schools and churches in their area, Mrs. X and her children have little knowledge of broader community resources in their area. Social and recreational needs are primarily met by watching television at home. Mrs. X has never attended a concert, play, sporting events or participated in swimming, boating, ice-skating, amateur music groups, choirs, card parties. She is politically unaware of local political campaigns, quality of candidates for public office, proposed local urban renewal or make use of the local branch library.
>
> Because of her limited social contacts, Mrs. X seldom wears a dress, high heels or puts on make-up. Preparing and eating a meal is more often viewed as a chore to feed hungry children rather than a time to plan with taste and delicacy. Manners and social graces are not often needed.

In contrast to the therapeutic approach used for the first group of mothers the approach used for the AFDC Group mothers more nearly resembled a form of parent education. These women had more community contacts, were active in other organizations, exhibited greater self control, appeared more intelligent and sophisticated, and although they had problems they seemed to be coping with them fairly well. Their behavior tended to be more like "normal" middle class mothers than did the relatively primitive behavior of the School Group mothers. Discussions focused on problems of all their children rather than just the daughter in the program. Actually they seemed more concerned with the behavior of their sons.

The differences between the two groups are highlighted by the mothers' group worker:

> Group I mothers (School Group) present unwavering chronic patterns of behavior on a primitive level. Basic giving and receiving of gratification between mother and daughter seems to be absent to a marked degree. There is an excessive use of punishment to control behavior.

There is a high involvement of the mothers in what happens in the daughters' group meetings. Very frequently there is an emotional re-hash in the mothers' group of what is occuring in the daughters' group meetings. It is quite easy to identify which daughter belongs to which mother. Behavior, speech, manner of relating, etc., seems identical.

There is a marked contrast between the two mothers' groups. Group II (AFDC) mothers are usually quite uninvolved with their daughters' activities, at least in terms of the group content. Group II meetings are more like adult education classes centering on general problems of child rearing. There are many similarities in content between Group II and the Child Study Workshop groups. They can verbally explore many highly charged areas such as adolescent sexual behavior with a minimum of anxiety. There is a great tendency to psychologize problems in an intellectual fashion. Their general concerns rarely touch upon the daughter in the program and they often discuss their other children as well as themselves.

Content of the Mothers' Group Discussions

The subjects of conversation within the mothers' groups ranged widely, but there was a common theme focusing on the family. An excerpt from one of the groups is presented below. The women are discussing their husbands--or ex-husbands:

Mother A: But when it hit, it really hit and he came in one day and slapped me in the face with something. I'm telling you, no woman should ever have to be hit with. I was mopping my floor, I went into the closet and I got out his nicely cleaned, laundered and ironed nice white shirts that I had stood and ironed for three hours. I laid them on the kitchen floor and threw water on them. I woke him up and threw them at him and said, "have your girl friend wash them." He left. I never did wash those shirts. I never seen them again. He sure didn't have any white shirts when he left the house.

Mother B: Is that when he beat you with a baseball bat?

Mother A: The landlord called the police. I was just sitting there just as naked when I came into the world. I was sitting right there on the porch. When they came I said, "Is this the police?" and I opened the door for them.

Mother C: Stark raving naked?

Mother A: I was sitting right there looking as though I just came into the world. He stripped me naked, so when I got through telling

the police what he did, they talked to him so nice--"[illegible], he's still young and so on." He called when he found I [illegible]ed the police on him and then he jumped and beat me. He jumped [illegible]eat me again. When he left I thought I never want to see him ag[illegible]. Never. I haven't seen him since.

Discussions were not always so grim. The following excerpt describes some reactions to the play "Richard the Third" which the group had seen at the Guthrie Theatre:

Group worker: Who was your favorite actor?

Mrs. D: Hume Cronyn, definitely.

Group worker: Was there anything about the way he was dressed or made up that was unusual?

Mrs. C: Yes, he was dressed different and I think he played the part very well with his handicap which also showed on the stage itself.

Group worker: What would you say would be the theme of the play? Was there any one thing that stayed in your mind?

Mrs. D: Well, Richard himself had a goal and no matter how he did it, he had this in mind that he was going to be king and no matter what he jeopardized in anyone else's life didn't matter just so he got to be king.

Group worker: Have you ever seen a Shakespearian play before?

Mrs. D: No, I never have.

Mrs. E: Do you know what I thought was the most touching scene in the whole play and I haven't heard anyone comment on it? Do you remember when Queen Ann was walking from the tower and she turned around and said "Take good care of my baby." I mean this was such a mother plea. And for my information I think she should have gotten a big hand for that because that was just the pouring out of a mother's soul.

Group worker: This, as I say, the play was written several hundred years ago telling a story of the people who lived in the olden days. A different country, a different way of speaking, nonetheless it somehow makes sense to us today.

Mrs. F: People from way back when suffer the same emotions and they're going to when we're dead and gone.

Mrs. G: How about the scene where the husband being dead and here Richard the III asks for her hand in marriage. She accepts and then she turns around like she's going to kill him, and the next sentence is willing to marry him.

Mrs. F: Ya, but did you see where he said my only contentment is to marry your daughter. And she says, "What are they going to do with me? I don't want to die." Oh, there wouldn't have been a Richard the III if he had come up to me.

Joint Meetings

After a "settling in" period of two or three months joint mother-daughter meetings were begun. The School Group mothers were more responsive to the idea of joint meetings, which was introduced early in the program, than were the AFDC Group mothers. In January 1965 the first joint meeting of School Group mothers and daughters was held. Approximately one month later the other group began to hold joint meetings. Once begun, joint meetings were held every second or third session.

A party atmosphere prevailed in most joint meetings. The meetings were planned and initiated by the mothers and daughters. Games and refreshments were usually included. These recreational meetings gave both mothers and daughters experience in planning and carrying out social functions. Most mothers and daughters were quite unfamiliar with the experience of engaging in joint social activities. Few of them had ever set aside a specific time for just having fun together.

Joint meetings proved to be valuable for diagnostic purposes. They also helped solve problems by bringing about a direct confrontation of opposing stories which had been expressed in the individual group meetings. In this respect the meetings focused on the communication problem which originally stimulated the idea of the program.

Other Program Activities

Monthly meetings, lasting approximately one hour each, were held by the two

group workers, YDP personnel and the school social worker. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the progress of the groups, to record observations of the workers on the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and to provide feedback to other persons interested in the program. Meetings were taped and transcriptions were made thus providing a detailed account of the workers' observations. Representatives from the Experimental Junior High School, which served the area in which the girls lived, and from the county welfare department also attended some meetings.

One meeting was held with the YDP Communications Panel, a program coordinating group composed of representatives from various YDP programs, to give information about the nature and operation of the Big Sisters Group Work Program. Another meeting was held with AFDC caseworkers from Hennepin County Welfare Department to give them feedback on the program since they had drawn up the roster from which participants in the AFDC Group had been selected.

In addition, responses to a standard list of questions were dictated each week for evaluation purposes. Involvement in other evaluation procedures was also very time consuming for the two workers. See Section XI, Evaluation Methods.

Group Meetings Terminate

In April 1965, after six months of operation, the participants took stock of their program. The AFDC Group and the group worker decided that this group was no longer benefiting from the program and it was discontinued. One mother-daughter pair transferred to the School Group which had elected to continue. An attempt was made to counsel discontinuing members into other activities or community services which might better fit their needs.

The School Group daughters program was terminated by their group worker in December 1965. She believed that the girls had obtained maximum value from the program and further meetings would be unrewarding. An attempt was made to counsel the girls into settlement house programs.

The School Group mothers wished to continue and did so until June 1966. A few women had been in the program since its inception in November 1964. During the last months the program setting was changed. Mothers met in their homes rather than in the chapel. This change was designed to increase self confidence and poise by allowing the women to assume responsibility for a social function involving a small group of people with whom they were well acquainted.

IV. RESULTS: What was demonstrated by this program?

(A brief summary of evaluation findings is presented in this section. Details are given in Section XI, Evaluation Methods.)

Several difficulties involved in the administration and evaluation of this program served to limit it as a demonstration. In the main, the program operated as a service.

Semantic confusion among YDP administrators, YDP research personnel, and the two group workers caused much of the difficulty. Administrative staff of the YDP proposed a program built on the observation that Target Area teenagers had trouble in communicating with their parents. Contacts with teenagers, made during the planning period, suggested that there was a "communication block" between parent and child. It was reasoned that removing this block would lead to healthier family relationships. Thus, improvement in communications was seen as an intermediate goal leading to the ultimate goal of improved family relationships.

This hypothesis was presented to the group workers. It was presumed that they would develop a program to test the hypothesis that improved communications lead to better family relationships. The group workers, on the other hand, presumed that further specifications for carrying out the program would come from the YDP.

Group meetings were begun, approximately seven weeks after the workers were hired, without a specific design for testing the hypothesis. After a few

meetings with the mothers the mothers' group worker suggested that the hypothesis was untenable and that communications was not really the problem. He reasoned that the participants might improve communications only to more effectively convey their dislike for each other.

Finally, YDP research personnel had the impression that program participants had been informed that testing or "experiments" would not be conducted and that the program was to be a service - only. This proved to be a faulty impression which was not dispelled until after the demonstration was completed. Throughout the entire program research personnel had the impression that testing was "forbidden" while the group workers thought that the research people were carrying out their evaluation as they pleased.

Without specified goals, procedures, or research design the group workers evolved a program based on their observations of the group participants and meetings with YDP personnel and other interested persons. This program focused on parent education for AFDC Group mothers and "therapy" for School Group mothers. The daughters' group worker "attempted to improve communications between mothers and daughters, to strengthen their relationship and to provide them with new tools in dealing with life's demands." (See page 10ff. for further details of the methods used by the workers.)

Some of the confusion regarding program operation was an indirect effect of reduction in time and funds for the YDP delinquency demonstration. This reduction meant that, in effect, the demonstration could not be operated as planned. In spite of this problem, there appeared to be a pluralistic ignorance present in the group work program, which was not present, to the same extent, in other YDP programs.

The factors described above made a test of the originally proposed hypothesis impossible. Subsequently, three short term evaluation goals were established:

1. Ascertain participants' reactions to the group sessions.
2. Attempt to gain a more specific statement of the types of goals which might be appropriate and feasible for a program of this nature.
3. To measure personality changes in the group members - over ti

Participants' Reactions

Questionnaire Results

Participants' reactions were obtained by questionnaire. They had been informed that they would "take stock" of the program after ten weeks to see if they wished to continue. Participants had agreed to remain in the program for at least ten weeks.

At the end of that time an evaluation of the program phase was made by the participants and both the School and AFDC Groups decided to continue with their meetings. Anonymous reactions were mailed to the YDP Research Unit so that group members could express their honest opinions without revealing their identity. All but two girls and six mothers responded. Some of the non-respondents were illiterate. Their reactions were obtained by the group workers. In general, reactions were very favorable at this point.

One girl did not think the meetings should continue; three others were "not sure." All of the mothers were in favor of the meetings except one who was "not sure." The girls noted that ". . . we can tell troubles and we can think of what to do next week" and "I think it should continue because after school when I get home I won't have anything to do." Mothers commented ". . . in general the meetings are easy to talk in and a relief to find others with the same kind of problem" and "I wouldn't stop because I wouldn't want her (daughter) to be dropped."

The girls emphasized food, playing games, and their group worker as the most desirable aspects of the program, while the mothers pointed out the relaxed, informal atmosphere and the benefits of learning from discussions.

Fights and squabbling among the girls were seen as a problem by both mothers and daughters. Most of the mothers felt that the other members in the group were helpful to them, or at least tolerant. "I'm glad to know everyone else loses their patience too, but I can't honestly say there have been any problems

solved. I think all of the women are pretty nice and it's been nice to meet them." The daughters were not all so favorably inclined toward their fellow group members. About one-fourth had negative feelings. "There is a couple I cannot stand." "I hate the girls from X school and I mean hate, too, too, too."

Mothers as well as daughters had generally favorable opinions of their group workers. "Well qualified." "I think she's wonderful."

Attendance

Attendance records and dropouts provided another measure of participants' reactions to the program. From December through March, 1965, fourteen meetings were held for each group except School Group daughters who held fifteen meetings. Three joint meetings for the School Groups and five joint meetings for the AFDC Groups were included.

Attendance for this time period was 71%, when all participants were counted. Daughters had higher attendance than mothers, 85% to 59%. Little difference in attendance rates was found between the AFDC Groups (69%) and the School Groups (72%). Mothers had similar rates in both groups (59% and 60%) and so did daughters (86% and 83%).

One mother in the School Group dropped out after a rather violent emotional outburst during one of the sessions. Her daughter also discontinued. Immediate referral to an appropriate clinical service was made for these participants. Two girls, whose mothers enrolled in the program but never attended, were dropped because of the joint focus of the program. Two other girls discontinued for reasons not connected with the program, i.e. moved, legal change of family status. In brief, only one mother-daughter pair discontinued voluntarily during the first four months of the program. None of the members in the AFDC Group discontinued.

A summary of participants' reactions to the program shows that at the end of

ten weeks subjective impressions were favorable and that for the first five months attendance by the daughters was very good and attendance by the mothers was reasonably good - in view of the "traditional" lack of involvement in activities outside the home for most low income mothers.

A Search for Appropriate Goals

An exploration of goals which might be appropriate to programs of this type was made by analyzing transcriptions of the lengthy, monthly discussions among group workers, YDP personnel, and other interested persons. These discussions clearly illustrated that two different approaches were being used for the mothers; therapy and parent education.

At the time the AFDC Group terminated the mothers' group worker observed that the program appeared much more appropriate for the School Group mothers. "I think above a certain level of adequacy the program is not necessary. I think for them (the AFDC Group) they have chosen a way of life that is functioning somewhat adequately for them. There is no extreme discomfort. They have managed the way of life for an AFDC mother. They have been involved in the community and the girls are doing well in school. This program cannot do very well with Mrs. X who was so disintegrated. There is something in between. . . I think that if they would have been in trouble, they would have continued."

This worker also had the impression that the AFDC Group mothers never really "trusted" the program. ". . . one of the things that is sort of impressing me - is my awareness of how guarded these women have really been all this time" . . . "This might have something to do with fears of an AFDC trap of some kind - that we're going to report something to somebody and might cut off grants." Possibly this observation stemmed from some confusion on the part of these mothers as to the purpose of the program.

The problem of clarity of purpose was not apparent for mothers in the School Group. Mothers knew that their children were having problems in school and this knowledge gave them a sufficient rationale for meeting. School problems

exhibited by the children apparently reflected problems of the mothers.

Three possible purposes for future programs for mothers were suggested by the analysis of the transcriptions:

1. Improve self confidence.
2. Mother-child relationships with specific emphasis on sex education, particularly for sons.
3. Recreation - in and of itself.

Four purposes were suggested for the daughters:

1. Improve self confidence.
2. Improve peer relationships.
3. Help them to handle feelings, particularly anger, in a more constructive manner.
4. Improve mother-daughter "relationships."

Of these four goals or purposes, "mother-daughter relationships" received the least mention. "Recreation" was suggested as an additional goal by the group worker since it had been stressed heavily in the meetings.

These purposes must be considered in view of the circumstances by which they were derived. The methodology was largely subjective, the sampling was small and biased, and there were no controls for comparative purposes. As such, future planners should consider these ideas as suggestions to be viewed in the light of more extensive knowledge. It is possible that different approaches, i.e. other than group work, might be more appropriate for attaining these goals.

Personality Changes of Participants

At the end of six months the group workers reported their observations of the program's impact on the participants. This was shortly after the AFDC Group had terminated. Most of the comments referred to the School Group where progress seemed much more tangible.

Mother's group worker:

I think it begins with what it does to them personally. in developing friendships and being able to carry on a relationship with people. It introduces to them a part of their lives that has been missing for a number of years. More specifically they do talk to their daughters. Their girl comes home with a note from school -- the mother doesn't hit her in the face anymore. The mother says well let's talk about it - what happened - should I go to school? Not only about the child in the program but other kids. Mrs. X, for example, is worried about her kid in the first grade. At the first sign of disturbance she goes down. She says, "I used to be afraid to talk to these people." I think another thing it gives them an idea about the future. They're talking about looking ahead. The women are now talking about the kids aren't going to be on AFDC all the rest of their lives. What are they going to do then? By the time the kids are 18 what are they going to do then? Should they train themselves for a job now? Should they maybe consent to a marriage they've been very insecure about. Most of them have boyfriends who want to marry these women, but the women don't trust them. They say well, they aren't going to be any better then it was with my other marriage. So they put these guys off. One woman said she thought it would be better if she goes off AFDC. She's trying to apply for a Civil Service job. She realizes she isn't going to make that much more money on a Civil Service job at her level of education. But it would be a few dollars more and she won't be criticized by her friends. There are a number of things that I think I could be more specific on. I think there has been some therapy going on.

Daughters' group worker:

I think in general the main thing this group has done is to offer them an opportunity for activities. They begin to relate much better to me, I think to trust me and expect help from me. I think learning skills is a great difficulty around school. They are afraid and consider school a place nobody likes. We have a lot of discussion about problems and how to do good about solving difficulties. I think the main thing is the relationship that is beginning to develop with other adults and with Perry as well as with each other.

We have seen a great deal of change in the way mother and daughter relate to each other. We see a number of things happening. The girls relate to me differently when we meet alone; when we have a joint group meeting, I am not as important to them. Also, they all run to Perry Roth, the male worker. In the beginning, they started to dress up in high heels; this was really a great effort to please

him and to impress him. This has become less important now and they are beginning to relate to him as a human being. We are able to see a great deal of change between the mothers and daughters and we think this program has been helpful. It really has been more of a treatment group, but I think it is only one level of treatment.

We are now beginning to see the other needs these people have, and we are only whetting their appetites. In the joint meetings, we introduced square dancing; now they are asking if there is any square dance group they can join in the community. They are beginning to make plans for summer. The change has been very slow in coming, but we see it as a continuing kind of thing. We were concerned whether they would be interested in meeting for ten weeks; now <u>they</u> are concerned whether we can meet with them for three years...

Following a year's experience with the School Group the workers again recorded their opinions of the progress that had been made.

Daughters' group worker:

After a period of one year, one can see a number of changes although I feel some of these changes are tenuous. Their behavior in the group is more disciplined and more highly organized. They have established close relationships in the group, and some girls continue the relationships outside the group. Their social skills have increased and they have a broader repertoire of behavior than previously. The girls have been exposed to a variety of activities and social situations, and although these activities are not part of their lives, they can participate appropriately when the opportunity arises. They can assume appropriate degrees of responsibilities when indicated. They very seldom volunteer. Some have become more outgoing and can express ideas and feelings more directly. They are able to tolerate conflict and find solutions to some problems. However, when the conflict is centered around a favorite group member, or group worker, the tolerance is still very low. They are able to accept help at times, and under certain circumstances. They talk quite freely about school and family and have used the group to ventilate feelings. They have done this a great deal the last few months. They are able to have socially acceptable fun together, and look forward to their meetings.

In striking contrast to the composite picture of the mothers at the beginning of the group meetings the composite of the mothers one year later describes a woman who is much more outgoing and interested in community activities.

Mrs. X is now highly involved in school functions. She has been a room mother, helped prepare a luncheon for some of the governors' wives at the recent Governors' Conference. She attends PTA meetings and events such as school carnivals. She will complain to her child's teacher that her child is being picked on. The school principal has encouraged her to apply as a teacher's aide in the Project Headstart program.

Because the mothers' group now meets in their homes, Mrs. X is trying out new recipes to be served with the coffee. She dresses up and performs her hostess chores with some grace. As part of a planning committee for the group she suggests a return visit to the Guthrie Theatre. However, with the close of the season at hand, she wonders what the University of Minnesota may offer.

Mrs. X recently attended a meeting at the Citizen's Aid Building. She was part of a protest group who met with representatives of the Health and Welfare Council. The group was protesting the recent appointment of the Executive Director of the neighborhood house in her area. In the meantime she has joined the AFDC League and is helping to organize neighborhood groups. This is part of their plan to decentralize.

Two new women have been added to the mother's group. Mrs. X volunteered to call one of them to personally encourage her to join. Mrs. X no longer requires transportation to the group meetings. She either arranges her own ride or, more usually, walks by herself at night.

In an attempt to measure personality change by somewhat more objective means the California Personality Q Set was employed. Because of many methodological and theoretical difficulties, results of this approach must also be considered as merely suggestive. Although results of the Q sorts do not appear to agree with the group workers' subjective impressions it should be noted that sampling for the Q sorts was limited and it is quite possible that different facets of personality were being examined.

Group leaders were asked to make personality Q sort descriptions under four sets of instructions:

1. Describe an "Optimally Adjusted Person."
2. Describe your own personality.
3. Describe each group member's personality as you think it will be in six months if the program is effective (goal personality).

4. Describe her personality as it is now ("actual" personality).

In summary, the Q sort correlation analysis revealed the following information.

Personality descriptions of mothers and daughters made by the two group workers near the beginning of the program were not similar to descriptions of an Optimally Adjusted Personality, nor were descriptions of the group members after six months involvement in the program similar to the Optimally Adjusted Personality.

Descriptions of participants' actual personalities were not the same in the fall as they were the previous spring. This finding may reflect unreliable ratings, or actual personality changes as seen by the group workers. Some support for the personality change interpretation is given by subjective comments of group workers and the consistently positive, albeit low, correlations between participants' actual and "goal" or "successful" personality descriptions recorded in the fall.

The two group workers had different conceptions of what their participants' personalities <u>should</u> be like. Although both workers felt that their own personalities were somewhat similar to that of an Optimally Adjusted Personality they did not agree that the goal personality for each group member should be similar to that of an Optimally Adjusted person. The mothers' group worker did see a generalized goal for all participating mothers which bore a substantial relationship to the Optimally Adjusted Personality - and also to his own personality. The daughters' group worker saw essentially no relationship between her own personality and the goal descriptions of the daughters nor did she see any strong relationship between the daughters' goal personalities and the Optimally Adjusted Personality.

Neither of the group workers saw a substantial relationship between their own personalities and those of their group members.

The correlation between personality goals for the mothers as seen by the mothers' group worker and personality goals for the daughters as seen by the daughters' group worker was zero. There was also little relationship between descriptions of mothers and daughters as they "actually" were in the spring and in the fall in spite of the fact that the group workers reported strong similarities in behavior of the mother-daughter pairs.

Current Status of the Program

In Spring 1965 and again in Fall 1965 the group workers attempted to recruit a group from one of the Target Area junior high schools. Both attempts proved abortive and the approach to junior high girls was abandoned. The girls did not seem interested and the mothers, although expressing interest, did not turn up at the meetings. Group workers felt that the girls referred were too "pathological" to benefit from this type of program.

A new group was formed of fifth and sixth grade girls from one of the poverty area elementary schools in March 1966. Although these families were also low income they were not receiving AFDC and in most cases two parents were present in the home. The focus of this group also was on school problems. Six or seven mother-daughter pairs were involved. After ten weeks the mothers decided to discontinue although the daughters wished to go on. The girls were referred to other Big Sisters programs.

As of this writing, October 1966, the group work programs have been incorporated into the Big Sister Association ongoing programs. Several significant changes have been made. Mothers are not required to attend in order for the daughters to be involved. Residence and income requirements have been lifted although, in fact, most participants are low income females from the Target Areas.

One group of seven mothers and three daughters' groups totaling 24 girls are meeting.

What was Demonstrated by this Program?

In the very strictest sense, one would have to conclude that nothing was "demonstrated" by this program. Lacking an adequate evaluation of a testable hypothesis we are left with mainly subjective impressions. These impressions, of course, may be very valuable in and of themselves.

Based on these impressions the strengths of the program were seen as follows:

1. The joint meetings provided an opportunity for mothers and daughters to have fun together.
2. Joint meetings also offered the women and their children a chance to assume responsibilities and to work cooperatively.
3. Joint meetings were useful to the group workers for diagnostic purposes and for problem solving "confrontations."
4. The joint focus of the program plus the provision of transportation provided a stimulus to the mothers to attend meetings. After initially becoming involved, so that their daughter might participate, some mothers found the meetings of value to themselves.
5. The use of a male and a female group worker appeared worthwhile. Basically, it offered the participants an opportunity to relate to each sex according to their ability. It also provided a model of "normal" male-female relationships.
6. Group workers had deveral meetings with individual AFDC caseworkers to discuss specific clients. This feedback appeared valuable as did the frequent contacts with the school social worker and school faculty.
7. Several women who had not been active or assertive in community activities appeared to be getting involved in such activities.
8. Some women, particularly those in the AFDC Group, who were initially active in several organizations appeared to be focusing their activities in a more meaningful way.
9. Selection procedures were carefully thought through and carried out. There was no doubt that the participants were low income persons and that, in one group at least, they had little contact with the community at large.
10. Attendance, by and large, was good, particularly for a group of "unreached" mothers. Although the joint attendance requirement had much to do with this it was felt that the initial explanations given by school personnel, caseworkers, and group workers played an important part.

11. The program was relatively inexpensive and seemed to operate easily within the administration of a social service agency. Staff size was very small, and continuous, direct supervision was not needed.

Weaknesses in the program, excluding the difficulties related to its demonstration aspects, were seen as follows:

1. Improvement in mother-daughter relationships was uncertain in many cases. In two instances the relationship noticeably deteriorated.
2. Services had to be refused to some clients who needed it because either the mother or daughter would not participate.
3. The group was often used as a threat by the mother in order to control the daughter, e.g. "If you don't shape up I will drop out of the group."
4. Daughters who were involuntarily removed from the program because their mothers would not participate might have felt this to be another sign of rejection by the mother.
5. A rather large population had to be reviewed in order to find sufficient cases who met all the selection criteria.
6. Selection of mothers by means of AFDC caseworker referrals apparently aroused some anxiety which was never completely dispelled. It appeared that a rather general "parent education" approach was too vague to overcome this anxiety. No such difficulty was encountered in the other group which focused on - and was selected because of - the daughters' problems in school.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:

Several suggestions may be made as a result of the experiences of this program. Some of them are obvious. They are repeated here because all too often the obvious is ignored.

It should be emphasized that these suggestions are based on the largely subjective observations of a small number of people involved in a very small group work program. Other programs may reveal different findings, but based on what we have learned these are the things which we would emphasize.

Administration

1. In order to conduct a demonstration program it is necessary to have staff, time and money. The group work program was sufficient as a service but sadly deficient as a demonstration. In context, this is one of the programs which was hampered severly by the cut in demonstration funds. Although 25 of the 30 programs proposed by the YDP were ultimately put into operation, many of them operated in a much different manner than called for by the original plans due to reduced staff size.

2. As a service, this program appeared to operate well within a traditional service agency at low cost and with a minimum of supervision.

3. Feedback to caseworkers and school personnel on an individual and group basis proved valuable.

4. A long term follow up with drop outs should be conducted. Some mothers returned to the program after many months absence. Possibly an "incubation" period is needed before some participants realize the value of the meetings.

Selection

1. Participants should be selected on the basis of a specific, common problem.

2. The initial description of the program to the mothers should focus on the problems of the children. Even though the "cause" of the problem may lie with the parents it appears that greater initial interest may be stimulated by focusing on the children. Subsequently, once the parents become involved, it is possible to direct the program to other topics, without great difficulty.

3. Participants for group discussions should not be selected simply because they have low incomes, or are on AFDC rosters. The range of personalities, interests and problems is far too great to assure a common ground for discussion. Any tendency that social agencies may have to view group work services, in general, as helpful to poor people should be curtailed. Specificity is needed.

4. Group work programs of a therapeutic nature should select persons exhibiting "moderate" degrees of pathology. Completely disoriented clients disrupt the meetings while relatively well integrated women, such as those in the AFDC Group, apparently do not need "therapy." (This language is very vague, but the details of the report may help define the terms.)

5. Participants who have interpersonal disagreements prior to the formation of the group should not be selected unless this disagreement is pertinent to the purpose of the program. The involvement of girls from two different schools introduced problems of school rivalry which tended to cause the group to deviate from its major purpose.

Group Meetings

1. The use of male and female workers proved valuable for this particular program. This value was probably related to the previous unhappy relationships with males on the part of participants and the apparently healthy, friendly relationships which existed between the two workers.

2. Providing transportation, particularly at night, and particularly at the

beginning of the program, was a necessity.

3. A great deal of advance preparation, or hand holding, is needed in order to keep the mothers involved in the program long enough to arouse their interest. Visits, phone calls inquiring about why a meeting was missed, and encouragement in many forms, were all carried out consistently and "immediately" by the group workers.

4. The joint focus of the program had both favorable and unfavorable aspects. Dropping a daughter from the group if her mother did not come may have had the dual effect of depriving the girl of a service and of reinforcing her belief that her mother did not care. Without insistence on joint participation it is possible that the mothers may not have attended at all. The joint meetings also served a useful function in terms of case finding and diagnosis for referral to other services. Accordingly, the joint focus is probably best used when there are adequate alternate or substitute programs or services to which involuntary drop outs may be referred.

Evaluation

1. In order to carry out an effective demonstration, adequate research staff must be involved early in the planning. In this program, for example, a completely adequate design would have tested the validity of the observation that communications in low income, one-parent families are poorer than in other kinds of families. Even this initial step was far beyond the resources and time limits of the demonstration.

2. The Q sort method used for evaluating personality "progress" was very unwieldy and laborious. For a service project the Q sort could be used on a spot basis to improve communications among program administrators. Such usage presumes immediate feedback.

3. <u>The basic hypothesis relating communications to family relationships is still an intriguing one and worth testing</u>. Such a test would require control groups of one-parent - high income families, two parent - low income families, two parent - high income families, as well as other controls, e.g. number of persons in the family.

BIG SISTERS TAKE ACTION

Fatherless Homes Project Target

Mother-daughter relationships in fatherless homes are the target of a pilot project by the Big Sister Association, Inc.

"We have worked with these mothers and daughters for ten weeks to help them improve their ability to adapt to the demands of life and to prevent a further breakdown of family ties," said Mrs. Anna Miller, Big Sister worker who meets with the daughters.

She and Perry Roth, of the Hennepin County Mental Health Clinic who works with the mothers for the Big Sister Association, spoke at the annual board meeting of the Big Sister Association Tuesday.

The girls in the two groups are ten and eleven years old. "We wanted to intervene before they reached adolescence so the problems they might have now would not be added to by teen-age problems," she explained.

The mothers and daughters are from the north target area of the Youth Development Project which is co-operating with the Big Sister Association in the demonstration program. This is the neighborhood bounded by Plymouth, Lyndale, Glenwood and Penn Avs.

Children's behavior is shaped largely by the parents. So to help these girls face the problems of adolescence, we have to reach the mothers first, Roth said.

One group of mothers and daughters was chosen with the help of school officials. They gave Roth and Mrs. Miller a list of children who might benefit from the program.

The second group was selected from the case files of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) records. The criteria was that the mothers had to be young, have been on AFDC payments for a short period of time, be able to plan ahead, and be able to take daily traumas in stride, Roth said.

"We eliminated the environmental problems that would keep the mothers from coming, such as their homes being too far from them to walk, the weather being too cold, or the fear of going out after dark. We are holding the meetings in their neighborhood and providing transportation," he pointed out.

"Being the only parent and rearing a child in a housing project in north Minneapolis is not an easy job," Roth said. He hopes the women will begin sharing themselves with each other and realizing that their problems are the major concerns of all mothers.

The meetings of the mothers are mostly discussion groups about the problems and topics of interest such as appearance and planning ahead. Mrs. Miller said she uses games and activity for the daughters because the girls can relate to it and it is important to them.

The girls in one group have decided to continue their program indefinitely, and the participants in the other group want to keep it until spring or summer vacation, Roth said.

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VI. ADMINISTRATION: What was the administrative structure for operating the program?

The Executive Director of the Minneapolis Big Sisters, Inc. was the administrator of the program. Two group workers were hired on a part time basis to conduct the groups under the Executive Director's general direction. Consultation and evaluation were provided by the Youth Development Project.

VII. STAFFING: What were the qualifications, size and training of the staff?

Staff for this program consisted of two social workers (part-time) trained in group work methods. One worker had primary responsibility for the mothers' groups. The other worked with the daughters. Staff complement was adequate for the program. No specific training for this program was given.

A woman was selected to work with the daughters' group and a man to work with the mothers. Each of these persons had a master's degree and over five years experience in carrying out group work programs in various settings.

VIII. BUDGET: How much did it cost? Where did the money come from? Where did it go?

Initial funding for this program came from the Archie D. and Bertha H. Walker Foundation and the Minneapolis Foundation. These foundations provided funds for the program operation from September 1964 until January 1965. During this period a special priority request was made by the Big Sister Association, Inc. to the United Fund of Hennepin County. In January 1965, the United Fund appropriated $4,400 to Big Sisters for one year's program operation as part of its contribution to the Youth Development Project. An additional $4,400 was provided in January 1966 to continue the program for another year.

All funds were used to pay the salaries of the group workers. The amount of money appropriated was adequate for the program. There were no unexpended funds.

IX. OPERATING STATISTICS: How many people were involved? When did the program begin? End? etc.

The two group workers were hired in September 1964 and Group meetings began in November with nine mothers and daughters in the School Group and nine mothers and ten daughters in the AFDC Group. All participants were from low income families living in the Poverty Area of Minneapolis.

About one-fourth of the participants continued in the program for a full year. Three girls in the School Group dropped out, or were dropped, because their mothers did not attend. One girl was sent to a foster home. Another moved.

Typically, there were five mothers from each group attending each session - although not always the same five. There were typically six girls attending the School Group sessions and eight or nine attending the AFDC Group sessions. In an average week, therefore, approximately twenty-five participants were involved in the program.

In April 1965, the AFDC Group terminated. One mother-daughter pair transferred to the School Group. Another mother returned to group meetings in January 1966 after the daughters' group was discontinued.

Daughters in the School Group disbanded in December 1965 at the request of the group worker. She believed that maximum value had been gained. This was the end of the demonstration period. Mothers continued to meet until June 1966. Other groups are meeting as part of the Big Sisters ongoing program.

Girls involved in this program were in fifth or sixth grade. Two North

Target Area schools were involved.

Mothers in the School Group were 35 years old on the average, had been married for eleven years and divorced four years. Only one woman was not on AFDC. In the AFDC Group the average age was somewhat lower.

All mothers, in both groups, had at least one child born out of wedlock and all were divorced.

Each mothers' group included one Negro woman. Three daughters were non white; one of them being the product of a mixed marriage.

Chronology of Significant Events

September 1964	2 Group workers hired.
November 1964	Group meetings begun with 9 mother-daughter pairs in the School Group and 9 mothers and ten daughters in the AFDC Group.
January 1965	First joint meeting of mothers and daughters.
April 1965	AFDC Group terminated with one mother-daughter pair transferring to School Group.
December 1965	School Group daughters' meetings terminated by caseworker. End of YDP demonstration period.
March 1966	New group formed of low income women (and daughters) not on AFDC and not only-parents. Focus on school problems.
June 1966	School Group mothers terminated. Groups formed in March 1966 also terminated.
October 1966	Group work programs incorporated into Big Sister Agency ongoing program.

X. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: What support or opposition to this program was given by the community?

Target Area Resident Participation

Originally, the idea for this group work program stemmed from discussions

with teenagers living in the Target Areas. Target Area residents were not involved in the administration of the program since the only employed persons had to be skilled in group work methods.

Community Support or Opposition

No opposition to the program was noted. Support was evidenced in several ways. Funds were provided by two local foundations and by the United Fund. Assistance in selecting appropriate participants was given by school personnel and by the Hennepin County Welfare Department.

Image of the Program

In general, this program has attracted relatively little attention in the community. One newspaper article, favorable in nature, appeared. No "letters to the editor" have shown up. All in all, it seems that the program was too small and its results too unobtrusive to create much of an "image."

XI. EVALUATION METHODS: What evaluation procedures were used to determine the impact of this program?

Program Purpose from an Evaluation Viewpoint

Some of the problems involved in attempting to arrive at a specification of the problem to be attacked by this program were discussed in Section IV, Results. The net result of these difficulties was that at the time the program began there was no clear statement of the program's purpose or procedures. It was generally agreed that the program would attempt to improve relationships between mothers and daughters living in one-parent low income families. However, there was no consensus on specific, testable hypotheses.

In the April 1964 proposal submitted to the President's Committee by the YDP, the following goals for this program were set forth:

1. This program is designed to gain new knowledge of problems faced by Target Area girls and new know-how in working with these girls.
2. This program is also aimed at reducing the communication block between Target Area mothers and their daughters.
3. The reduction of this communication block will strengthen the family unit.
4. This program will provide new knowledge about the feelings and concerns of mothers faced with raising a family alone.
5. This program will provide new knowledge relative to the concerns of Target Area girls who reside in an integrated community.

Six months later, following several meetings between YDP staff and the group workers, the problem of multiplicity of goals for the program was very much in evidence. A memo from the YDP Community Services Coordinator stated that "We need to specify the purposes of this program more precisely." Based upon discussions he suggested six goals--none of which were precisely the same as those mentioned in the original proposal. Communications were not mentioned, apparently as a result of one discussion which emphasized that simply communicating would not necessarily bring about the desires interpersonal relationships. The mother and daughter might communicate freely and accurately, but still disagree violently--so the argument went. About the same time, one of the group workers suggested that the major goal should be change in self-concept.

It appears that lack of goal clarity carried over to at least one of the mothers' groups. Reporting on the January 7, 1965 meeting, the group worker said, "The rest of the meeting went on about should they or should they not continue and what was the purpose of the program."

It gradually became clear that, except for the very general goal of helping improve mother-daughter relationships, no consensus of specific program purpose could be reached. Therefore, it was decided that the first year of the program should be treated as an exploratory program with a major goal being the investigation of activities or subjects which would be pertinent to this kind of approach.

The belief that direct measurement techniques, i.e. those involving the group members, could not be used seriously hampered plans for any kind of evaluation. Although this belief later proved to be unfounded it operated as effectively as if direct measurement techniques had actually been denied. The parallel misconceptions held by YDP researchers and the group workers must be considered as a minor classic in misunderstanding. For almost two years the researchers thought that access to the initial group of participants was impossible because the program had been interpreted as a service and not an experiment while group workers thought the researchers either did not or could not devise a suitable evaluation approach. Only when the first draft of the final report was written did this misunderstanding come to light.

Because of the problems of goal specification and the presumed cutting off of direct access to the participants very limited evaluation goals were established. They were:

1. To attempt to ascertain participants' reactions to the group sessions.
2. To attempt to gain a more specific statement of the types of goals which might be appropriate and feasible for a program of this nature.
3. To measure personality changes in the group members - over time - as seen by the group workers.

Other goals which might have been pursued by observational techniques, such as one-way screens and interaction chronographs, were discarded due to the limited resources of the reduced YDP demonstration.

Evaluation Design

Participants' Reactions:

Subjective reactions of program participants were obtained by questionnaires distributed to the group members at the end of ten weeks of meetings. These

questionnaires were distributed by the group workers and were returned to the YDP Research Unit by mail, unsigned. Two follow up letters were mailed in order to increase returns.

Reactions were also measured by the more objective indicators of attendance and persistence in the program.

Specification of Goals:

A mass of subjective information was gathered from the two group workers. Since these two people were, in effect, the only sources of information about this program they carried a very heavy burden. Group workers answered a standard set of questions on each meeting. Responses were dictated into a recorder and transcribed. The questions were:

1. How many people were in your group this week?
2. Who were they (names)?
3. What was the most important thing that happened in the group during this meeting? (You will have only five minutes to discuss this.)
4. Was there anything else that happened that you feel is important?
5. All in all, what is your general impression of the group at this time?

Responses to these questions were analyzed to help gain insight into future program possibilities.

Group workers also met with YDP staff members, monthly, to discuss the program. Minutes of these meetings were also recorded, transcribed and analyzed. These meetings generally lasted about one hour. A formal content analysis was not undertaken of either the short standard interview or the longer group meetings since the pay-off did not give promise of being consistent with the amount of effort which would have been required.

Personality Changes:

In an attempt to gain some idea of the impact of the program on the personality structure of participants, group leaders were asked to describe the personality of each participant by means of the California Q Set (Block, J., 1961). Leaders were also requested to describe the personality of each participant ". . .as you think she might be six months from now if she continues in the group and the group discussions are as effective as you hope they will be." In effect, this procedure yielded base line and "goal" personality descriptions. Additional descriptions were to be made of each participant periodically throughout the program to measure "progress" toward the goal personality.

The group workers also described their own personalities and that of a theoretical "optimally adjusted person." These two Q sorts were used for control purposes. Basic sorting instructions, used for all sorts, are shown below:

> There are 100 cards in this deck. On each card is a short descriptive statement about personality. The cards are to be sorted into nine categories according to the category cards you see on the table. Category 1 indicates something extremely uncharacteristic or negatively salient of the person you are describing. At the other end category nine indicates something extremely characteristic or salient about the person.
>
> A specified number of cards should be sorted into each category. For example, five cards should go into category one; eight cards into category two and so on. The number of cards for each category is marked on the category card.
>
> This procedure can be cumbersome, but past experience has shown that by first sorting the cards into three piles the job becomes much easier. Simply place all characteristic items in one pile; all uncharacteristic items in another pile and the remaining cards constitute the third pile. After these three piles have been determined you can then sort the cards according to the required numbers.

Examples of statements on the cards are: Regards self as physically attractive; Over-reactive to minor frustrations - irritable.

Initially, these instructions were read to the two group leaders who were to

make the sorts. In subsequent sessions, the sorters were given the instructions in written form. All sorts were made independently. At no time were the two leaders brought together while sorts were being made, although they had frequent contacts for other purposes.

Administration instructions for each of the four sorting conditions were as follows:

1. Optimally Adjusted Personality

   With these instructions in mind, you are to sort the cards so that they describe an "Optimally Adjusted person." That is, a person whom you would consider as having an "Optimally Adjusted" personality. It is not necessary that such a person exist. The description may be of a hypothetical or idealistic person.

   There is no time limit; but most people finish in about fifteen minutes.

2. Yourself

   Now - I want you to describe yourself as best you can. We realize that personalities fluctuate from time to time, but try to sort the cards according to those descriptive statements which you feel are usually characteristic or uncharacteristic of you.

3. "Successful" Group Member Personality

   For this sort we want you to consider Mrs. _____*_____. Since this program is based on the presumption that certain favorable changes will occur among the group members, we would like you to describe Mrs. _____*_____ as you think she might be six months from now if she continues in the group and the group discussions are as effective as you hope they will be.

4. Present Group Member Personality

   (This sort was made on the group member only if she was present at the previous group meeting.)

   For this sort, we want to describe Mrs. _____*_____ as you think she is today.

---

* Names of group members inserted according to a pattern-originally established by random selection. Pattern varied considerably because of attendance fluctuations.

The analysis called for correlating each Q sort description of each participant with her goal description. The basic assumption was that consistent personality improvement would result in larger and larger correlations as each of the periodic descriptions was correlated with the goal description.

Evaluation Results - Participants' Reactions

Fourteen girls and nine mothers returned questionnaires describing how they felt about the program at the end of ten weeks. Comments about the program were generally favorable. A brief summary of reactions is given in Section IV - RESULTS. Detailed responses to each question are given below.

Question 1: In general, do you like the group meetings?

All of the mothers and eight of the girls replied that they did like the meetings. Five of the girls were not sure, and one did not like them.

	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Girls	8	1	5	14
Mothers	9	0	0	9
Total	17	1	5	23

Discussion:

Comments of Girls:

- If the girls would cooperate it would be much more fun and worthwhile.
- In a way I do and in a way I don't because sometime I do not like to do the things that they want to do.
- I really don't know. I'd like it a lot more if it wasn't for some people. Are else I think I like it.
- Yes, I like the meetings very much.
- Because I like Mrs. Miller.
- Like the club because we can play games and eat popcorn and stuff like that. That is way I like it.
- I like them, but sometimes I just don't know.
- I think the club meetings are good and we can tell trubles and we can think of what to do next.

NOTE: Original grammar and spelling have been preserved.

Comments of Mothers:

- Yes, we seem to be able to talk freely togather about evertying good and bad and we just solve a problem by having both mothers and daughters meet togather and tell what they thought and what their problem was.
- They are very interesting.
- So far the meetings have been very helpful to me. Facing our individual problems is the first step toward understanding and doing something about them.
- My daughter likes her group meetings and I wouldn't stop because I wouldn't want her to be dropped.
- In general the meetings are easy to talk in and a relief to find others with the same kind of problems.

Question 2: Do you think the meetings should continue?

Eight of the mothers and ten of the girls were in agreement that the meetings should continue. One of the girls did not wish to have the meetings continue and four were not sure.

	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Girls	10	1	3	14
Mothers	8	0	1	9
Total	18	1	4	23

Discussion:

Comments of Girls:

- If some of the girls want to I think they should.
- In a way I do and in a way I don't because sometimes it is a lot of fun and sometimes it isn't fun because I do not to play some of their games.
- As I said before I don't know.
- Yes, I think it should.
- I don't know.
- I think it should continue because after school when I get home I won't have anything to do.
- I would very much like to continue.
- It gives us something to do after school and it's fun.

Comments of Mothers:

- Yes, they should continue; it will help the mothers and the daughters

how to get along with others and consideration for one and all regardless of color or race.

- I think these discussions are very helpful.
- A good thing has been started and I for one hope they can continue.
- Perhaps for a while.
- I like it more now that we have something definite to discuss like the book--rather than rambling on into past lifes, etc.
- These meetings are going to be a big help to a lot of people once it really gets off the ground.

Question 3: What do you like most about the meetings?

The girls indicated the recreational activities and food as being the most enjoyable; running second in preference was the group leader. One enjoyed everything, and one wasn't sure. The mothers indicated the discussions sessions as the most enjoyable part of the meetings, and rated the relaxed atmosphere as second.

Discussion:

Comments of Girls:

- Play time and talking about the club.
- Eating, games and talking togather.
- Some of the games and the things we eat and do.
- We do things.
- I like two things--they are eating and play games.
- When we go places.
- I like everything about it.
- My group leader.
- I don't know.
- What I like about the meeting is I can eat popcorn and stuff like that, and I can play games.
- The games and our group leader, and the discussions.
- On Thursdays there is always something to go to. We sit and talk and eat while were talking. We play games and do projects.
- When we play games and other things and our group leader.
- The games and leader.

Comments of Mothers:

- The discussions on different things concerning the problems we all had